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Committee for Programme and Coordination
Forty-third session
9 June-3 July 2003
Agenda item 9
Adoption of the report of the Committee on its forty-third session

Rapporteur: Mr. Jerry **Kramer** (Canada)

Addendum

Programme questions: evaluation

Item 4 (c)

In-depth evaluation of the programme on the law of the sea and ocean affairs

1. At its 2nd and 3rd meetings, on 9 June 2003, the Committee considered the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the in-depth evaluation of the law of the sea and ocean affairs (E/AC.51/2003/3).

2. The representative of OIOS introduced the report. Representatives of the Secretary-General responded to the questions raised during the Committee's consideration of the report.

Discussion

3. General satisfaction was expressed with the report and the performance of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea. The view was expressed that it was essential to promote the universal acceptance of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and its agreements. In that respect, support was expressed for the recommended review by the Division of its capacity to discharge its different functions. Strong support was expressed for the active participation of the Division in decisions made to establish the new inter-agency mechanism requested by the General Assembly in 2002.

4. As regards the proposal to further synthesize the information received from the competent organizations in the annual report, that was not considered necessary. On the efforts undertaken by the Division to study State practice, concern was expressed

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that to supplement the low response rate to surveys sent to Member States, the Division was using information gathered by other competent organizations. It was stated that there were no other competent organizations to provide information on the regulatory practices of States since only Member States were in a position to do so.

5. It was also noted that the quality of the comprehensive annual report on oceans and the law of the sea should be maintained.

6. It was observed that the Division had an important role to promote consensus and foster greater acceptance of the international legal regime for the ocean in terms of sustainable development, which should not be limited to the analysis of the economic benefits expected from participation in the regime.

7. Clarifications were requested on who was responsible for preparing the internal assessments mentioned among the categories of information used for the in-depth evaluation. Details were also requested on the specific benefits that had been outlined to States to encourage their submissions of claims on outer limits of the continental shelf and on the status of the related course manual prepared by the Division. Questions were raised about which countries had benefited from training and the award of fellowships. Clarification was requested on the meaning of reconciling environmental boundaries with administrative or political boundaries.

Conclusions and recommendations

8. **The Committee recommended approval of recommendations 1 to 7 of the in-depth evaluation of the programme on the law of the sea and ocean affairs (E/AC.51/2003/3), subject to the observations set out below.**

9. **The Committee highlighted the important role played by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea in promoting universal participation of the Member States in the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea. In that regard, the Committee emphasized the need to ensure the adequate capacity of the Division to carry out its functions, and that the Division should be encouraged to actively participate in regional cooperation activities on matters relating to oceans and seas.**

10. **The Committee understands that the International Seabed Authority will be involved in the consultations envisaged in recommendation 1 since some of the issues dealt with at such consultations fall within the mandate of the Authority.**

11. **Concerning recommendation 4, the Committee considered that the annual report on oceans and the law of the sea should not include assessments of the overall impact of the efforts of the competent organizations and make suggestions for future activities but rather should focus on the issues pertinent to oceans and seas in a systematic and integrated fashion.**